

**TESTIMONY ON BEHALF OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE MARC ELRICH ON BILL 17-21, POLICE –  
COMMUNITY INFORMED POLICE TRAINING**

Greetings Council President and Councilmembers, I am ACAO Caroline Sturgis. I appear before you on behalf of County Executive Elrich regarding Bill 17-21. The County Executive supports the concept of the bill but he has concerns with the way it is currently structured as it may have unintended consequences. The Executive supports community informed police training by including it in the police academy training for new officers and mandate annual refreshers of the training through in-service training for all police officers. This training should not be a prerequisite for entering into the police academy.

The bill as proposed places a financial burden on potential applicants by requiring completion of a lengthy course before being hired by the police department. The police department is concerned that it could deter qualified applicants.

The Executive supports the need for improved police recruiting and training, which are the focus of the bill. Last year, the County Executive launched an independent audit of the police department and a soon-to-be released preliminary report provides recommendations to enhance both recruiting and training. The police department audit preliminary report will be available at the end of this month. The Executive is committed to implementing the recommendations offered by the independent consultant that are evidence-based best practices.

My submitted written testimony contains more technical details. Thank you for your time this afternoon.

Below are points of clarifications for the bill:

1. Police cadets as defined in the bill does not align with the Montgomery County Police Department recruits, which are defined as police officer candidates. The police department has a cadet program which hires part-time employees who work for the department and attend college to gain either the minimum college credits for hiring or obtain a bachelor's degree. To ensure consistency, we recommend correcting this language in the bill.
2. The bill states "prior to acceptance to the police academy," an applicant must complete a "prerequisite program" to develop competency in community services and social justice. We interpret this requirement as an additional education prerequisite that must be successfully completed before application. This is important because the Maryland Police Training and Safety Commission ("MPTSC") sets forth certain pre-hire requirements for police recruits prior to becoming a sworn officer, one of which is a mandatory background check prior to starting the police academy. The background check is only valid for a one year. Thus, an individual would need to successfully complete the prerequisite program before making application and going through the hiring process, which would include the mandatory background check. Therefore, we suggest that the phrase "prior to acceptance in the police academy" in line 42 be changed to "prior to application to the police academy."
3. The bill specifies that the educational program must consist of "30 credit hours" or their equivalent. A normal college semester consists of 12-15 credit hours, a program consisting of 30 credit hours would roughly equate to one year of full-time college course work. If that is the intent of the bill, it would be helpful to clarify.
4. Lastly, the bill notes that executive level officers and newly promoted sergeants must attend leadership classes with a focus on several areas. Much of this training has been provided by the department for nearly 15 years through the International Association Chiefs of Police Leadership in Police Organizations three-week course. Supervisors attend

various types of this training as well as supervisory in-service training annual for a variety of subjects as those described in the bill.